

Feb 21, 2023

Greetings to the Co-chairs, Ranking & Distinguished Members of these Committees!

My name is Ramon Garcia and I'm a parent advocate for ConnCAN. I have been a lifelong resident of Connecticut and today I am testifying in support of House Bill 6663- An Act Establishing The English Language Learners' Bill of Rights.

Growing up in this state and attending school I witnessed the many barriers and negative effects that the absence of translators had on many of my fellow students. Many of whom were marginalized and alienated simply because they couldn't speak English. They would often lag behind in educational studies and wouldn't be able to participate in other school activities as a result of this.

There were hardly any interpreters to translate for them, and if they could speak some English they were regularly tasked with having to translate between teachers and their parents. Especially during parent-teacher conferences, as well as many other instances. These barriers not only existed amongst Latino students but also with many of my Asian, African, and Polish friends where I went to school in the New Britain School District.

This was thirty years ago, and today in our state, the number of families migrating from different parts of the globe has increased dramatically! Currently, within our state, we have almost fifty thousand English Language Learners and that number continues to grow. It would be a great disservice to all of these kids and their families to deny them the opportunities and the means necessary to learn and become educated! As well as the opportunity to participate in other school activities, such as with their other fellow students who do speak English.

I humbly ask for your support in passing House Bill 6663, so that no child, nor family is left behind and deprived of receiving a good education. Connecticut has come a long way throughout recent years, and with the passing of this Bill, and investing in our children, we will continue to progress and prosper as a state, and build a better Connecticut for all!

Thank you all very much for your time, take care!

Respectfully, Ramon Garcia